

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
-Water Quality Protection Program-

The Agriculture and Rural Lands Action Plan

-An Overview-
Sanctuary Advisory Council
February 25, 2002



Sanctuary Water Quality

- Good water quality is essential for a healthy ecosystem
- Offshore waters are relatively clean
- Nearshore waters, tributaries, estuaries and harbors are in need of improvement

Water Quality Protection Program

- Action Plans -

- WQPP established in 1994
- 7000 square miles of watershed in six counties
- Urban Runoff, Marinas and Boating Activities, and Regional Monitoring plans completed
- Agriculture Plan developed in 1999

Watersheds that drain to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary





Agriculture and Rural Lands Action Plan

Goal: Reduce agricultural runoff in the form of nutrients, erosion and pesticides

Strategic Plan: 24 strategies, 6 strategy types

- Agricultural industry plays key role
- Expanding on and leveraging existing efforts
- New programs based on identified gaps



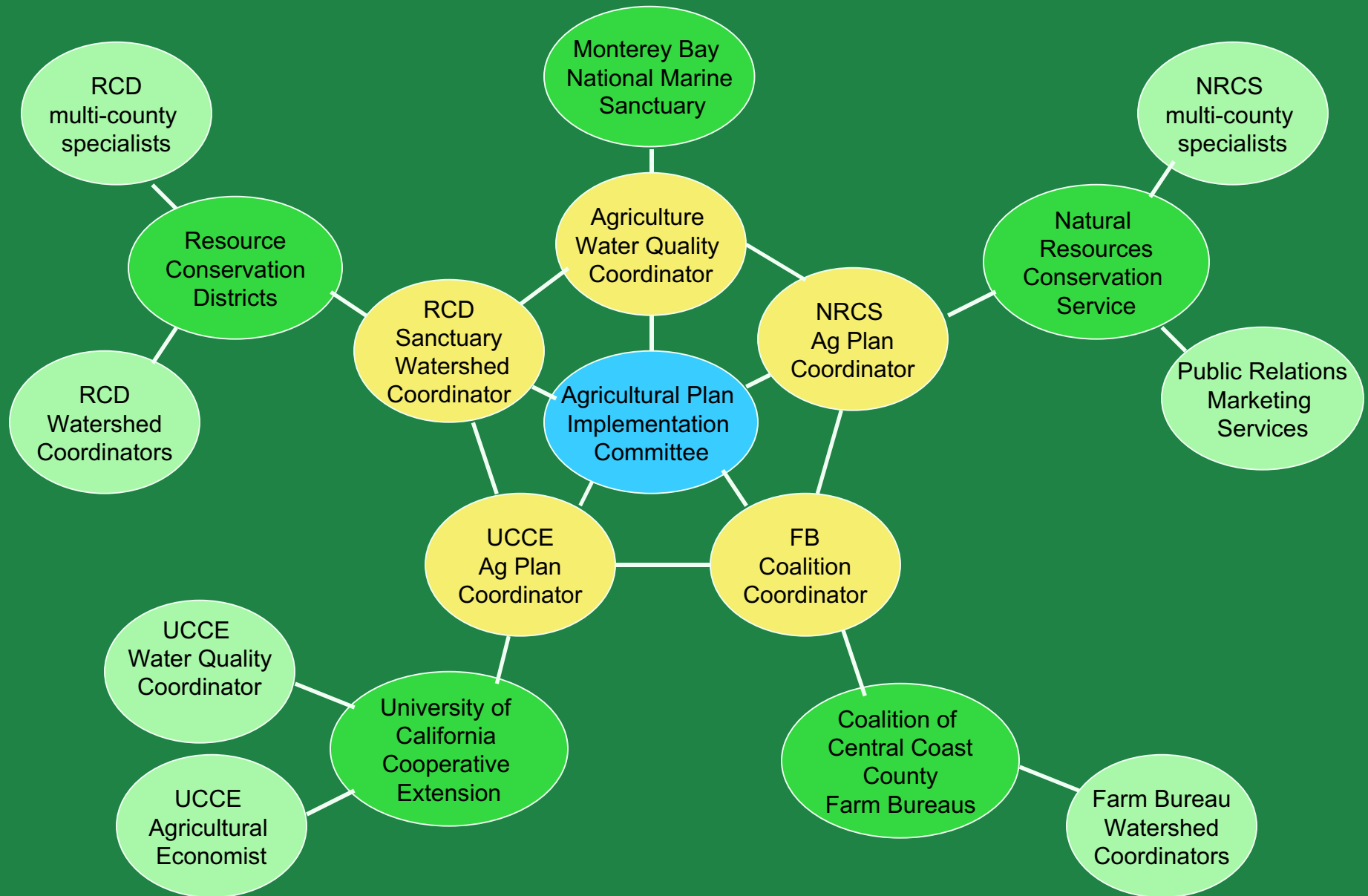
Concerns of the Ag Community During Planning

- Landowner concerns that working with agencies would lead to fines and regulatory action
- Economic viability of agriculture would be further impacted
- Mutual mistrust between agriculture industry and environmental organizations

Ag Plan Components

- 1) Strengthen agriculture industry networks
- 2) Improve technical info and outreach
- 3) Increase education and public relations
- 4) Regulatory coordination and streamlining
- 5) Funding mechanisms and incentives
- 6) Public lands and rural roads maintenance

Agriculture and Rural Lands Action Plan IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS



Strategy 1

Strengthening Agriculture Industry Networks

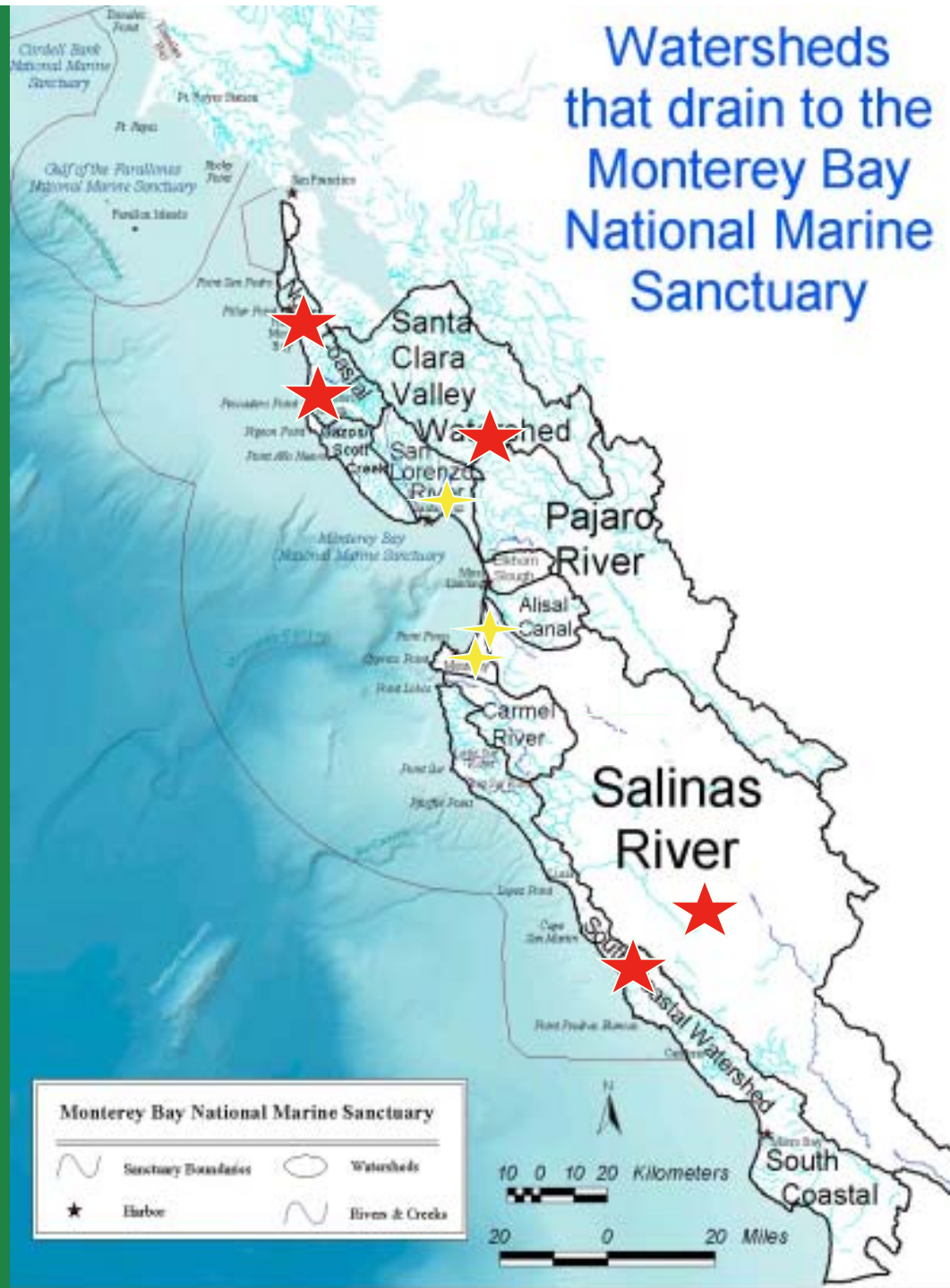
- Information spreads from farmer to farmer
- Goal: Working together on water quality improvements per watershed
- Coalition of Central Coast Farm Bureaus formed in 1998

Coalition of County Farm Bureaus

- Water Quality Action Plans for each of the counties identify priority watersheds
- Farm Bureau Watershed Coordinators organize watershed working groups
- Working groups address local water quality issues

Pilot Watersheds

Watersheds
that drain to the
Monterey Bay
National Marine
Sanctuary



Farm Water Quality Short Courses

- UC Cooperative Extension courses offered in all six counties
- Technical training, overview of water quality issues, introduction to agencies and staff contacts
- Land managers develop farm water quality protection plans for their properties

Farm Water Quality Short Course : Farm Tour



Monitoring Water Quality and Tracking Success

- Watershed scale water quality monitoring
 - Annual watershed reports
- Farm or field scale monitoring
- Conservation practice tracking

Strategy 2

Improving Technical Information and Outreach

- Coordinated field presence, interagency cooperation
- Increased NRCS technical field staff to support water quality projects
- Compilation of technical outreach materials and costs of conservation measures
- Development and promotion of self-monitoring tools

Technical assistance
to promote
conservation

-Cover Cropping-



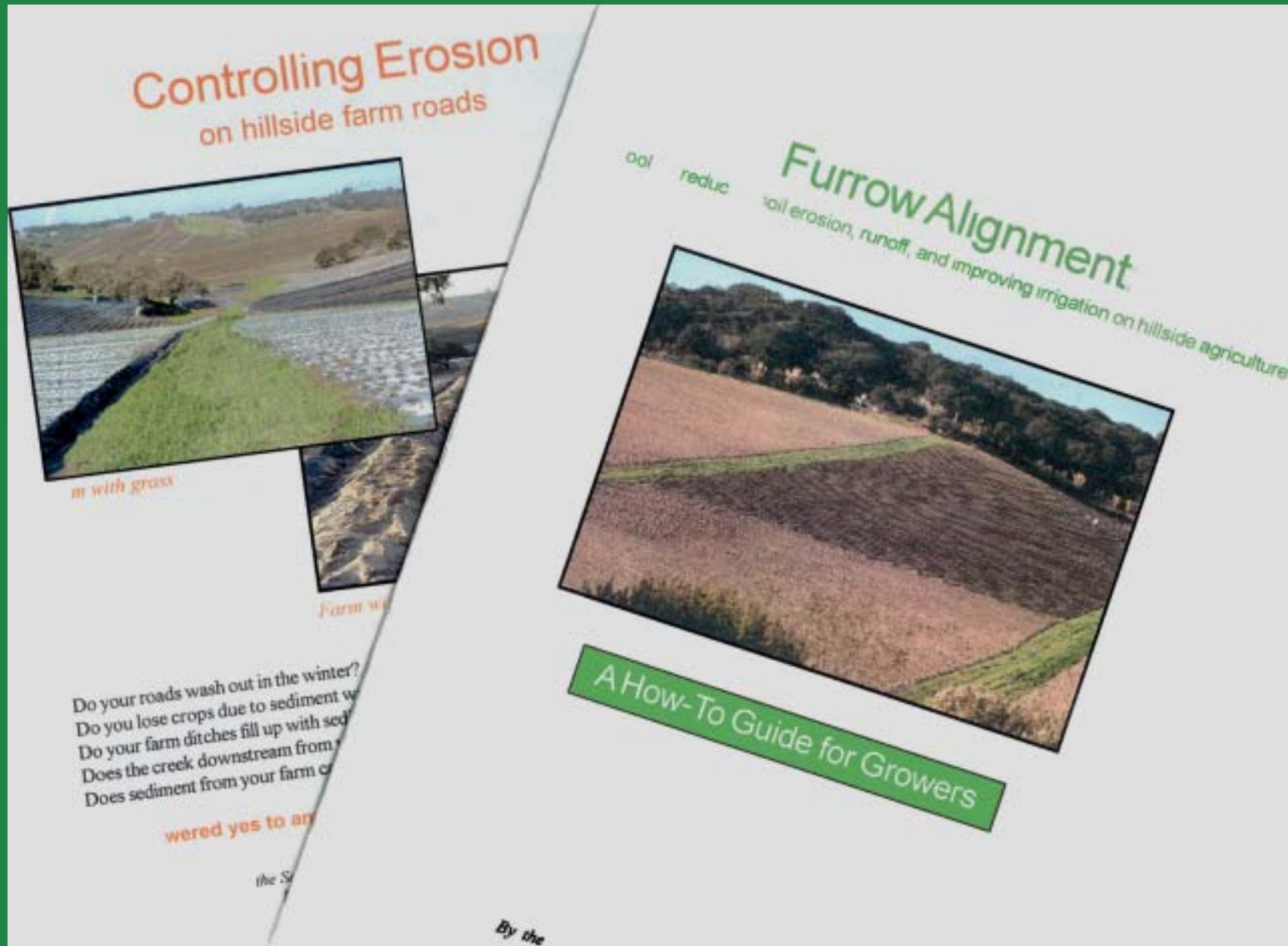
Grassed Waterway



Hedgerows



Technical Outreach Materials



Self Monitoring Tools : Nitrate Test Kits



Education and Public Relations

- Increase grower and public awareness of watershed management
 - Watershed assessments
- Increase public knowledge of and support for agricultural conservation measures



Sediment Basin



Education and Public Relations

- Increase grower and public awareness of watershed management
- Increase public knowledge of and support for agricultural conservation measures
- Marketing firm hired to encourage farmer participation and public support of Ag Plan implementation
- Website development for multi-agency field staff and farmers/ranchers and public
- Hispanic farmer outreach strategies

Hispanic Outreach



Strategy 4

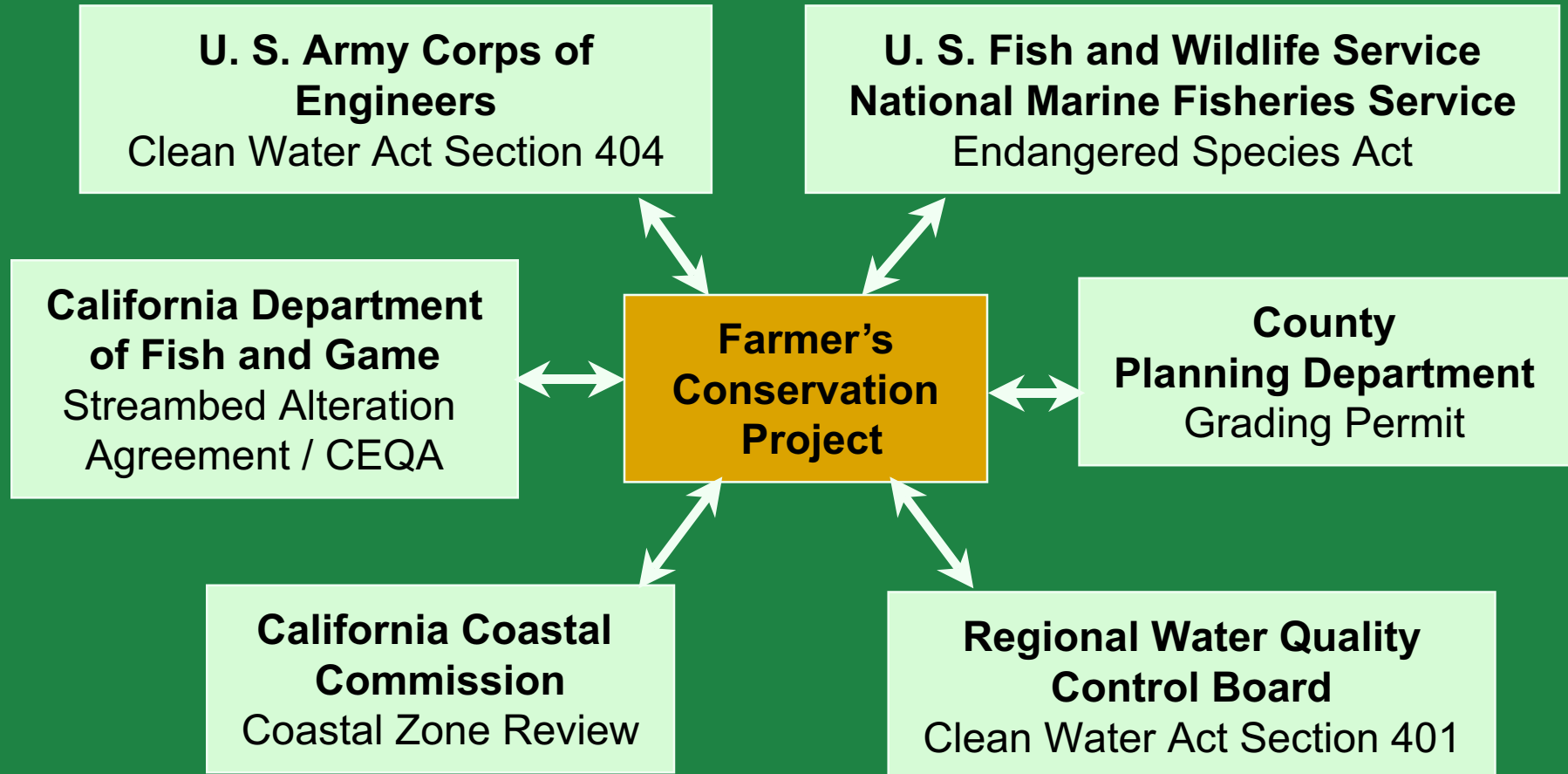
Regulatory Permit Coordination for Conservation Measures

- Multi-agency permits can be costly and time consuming
- Goal: Remove regulatory disincentives for water quality improvement work
- Watershed permits protect resources while removing barriers to installing conservation measures on properties

Stream Bank Protection



Regulatory Review



Elkhorn Slough Permit Coordination Results

● 1998-2000 Elkhorn Slough Conservation Benefits:

- 33,600 tons of soil captured on 26 farms
- 9,000 tons annually retained on farm
- 1.5 miles of stream enhancement
- More riparian projects
- More farmers using NRCS practice standard
- Reaching new farmers

Funding Mechanisms and Incentives

- Goal: Improve knowledge of and access to funding sources
- EQIP and other cost share programs
 - GPA status - Watershed based funding
 - RCD cost share grants
- Fields to Ocean program



Strategy 6

Public Lands and Rural Roads

- Road maintenance training
- Increase conservation measures on agency / public trust lands



Eroded culvert



Leveraging Resources

- Congressional USDA allocation to NRCS
- Multiple grants to Farm Bureau Coalition, Sanctuary, RCDs, UCCE, etc.
- Ag industry participation
- Enhanced collaboration with many organizations
- Increased awareness of water quality issues
- New staff hires set the stage for future implementation efforts

Lessons Learned

- Ag Plan brought together diverse, often adverse, stakeholders
- Collaborative planning process led to long-term stakeholder support and leveraged efforts of partner organizations
- Agency collaboration improved by strategic plan structure
- Industry-led program created momentum for farmer led initiatives